

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5070

As of January 22, 2009

Title: An act relating to addressing the threats posed by invasive species.

Brief Description: Addressing threats posed by invasive species.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/22/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Background on the Invasive Species Council. The Legislature established the Invasive Species Council (Council) in 2006. The Council's statutory purposes include providing policy level direction, planning, and coordination regarding the prevention and control of invasive species issues in Washington. The statutory goals of the Council include serving as a forum for identifying and understanding invasive species, facilitating joint planning and cooperation among those involved, educating the public, and providing policy advice to the Legislature.

Council membership consists of representatives from state and federal agencies, local governments, and other members invited by the Council. The Council is administratively located within the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), and the RCO and participating agencies provide staff support to the Council.

2008 Strategic Plan. The Legislature directed the Council to develop a statewide strategic plan for addressing invasive species in Washington by June 2008. Required elements of the strategic plan include:

- statewide coordination and interagency cooperation regarding invasive species;
- prevention and management of invasive species populations; and
- inventory, monitoring, research, and public education regarding invasive species.

The Council released its strategic plan June 5, 2008. Following initial strategic plan development, the Council must update the plan at least every three years.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: Directs the Council to collect and distribute invasive species-related information. The Council must take several actions implementing elements of its 2008 strategic plan relating to statewide coordination and invasive species-related information collection and distribution. These actions include:

- developing a statewide baseline assessment of invasive species and invasive species related programs in Washington;
- providing public access to invasive species information through an internet-based information clearinghouse; and
- conducting a targeted outreach campaign to provide information about invasive species issues and steps the public can take to address such issues.

Establishes a grant program to address invasive species issues. The Council must provide grants to state and local agencies for the prevention, control, or eradication of invasive species using any funds the Legislature provides for this purpose. Under the grant program, the Council must fund those projects and activities deemed the most effective investment to address the state's invasive species issues. The grant program provides authority and direction to the Council regarding funding categories, project evaluation criteria, and grant administration.

The RCO must provide staff support for the Council's grant making activities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Further efforts for invasive species intervention and protection are needed. For example, aquatic invasive species at Washington's doorstep could devastate hydroelectric projects and irrigation by clogging pipes. Creating a baseline set of invasive species data will allow more strategic activities in this area. Although it is important to fight invasive species, the most cost effective solution is to prevent them from being introduced. Anything that can be done to educate the public about invasive species is also helpful.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jack Field, Washington Cattlemen's Association; Eric Anderson, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Leonard Young, Department of Natural Resources; Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy.